



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Washington, DC 20515

James L. Oberstar
Chairman

John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member

June 9, 2010

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The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing to express our concern and disappointment that, as of this date, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has not issued the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on flight and duty time limits for flight crew members. We have received repeated assurances, including testimony from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Babbitt, that FAA would complete the rule by the end of 2009, which then slipped to this spring, and still nothing has been produced.

Pilot fatigue is a significant safety concern. In 1989, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued three recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation calling for research, education, and revisions to existing regulations. These recommendations were added to the NTSB's Most Wanted list in 1990; and have remained on the list for 20 years. In the meantime, pilot fatigue continues to be identified as a contributing factor in many aviation accidents.




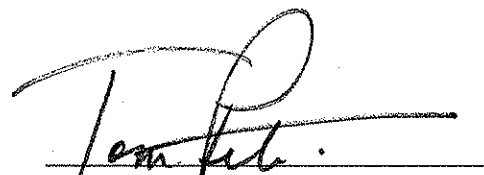
While we recognize that the science of fatigue is complicated and that the DOT must study and understand the ramifications of any change in existing regulations, a comprehensive review has not occurred in over 60 years. It is unacceptable that the DOT has not finished the process begun in 1995 to update the flight and duty regulations for airline pilots.

Almost a year ago, an industry aviation rulemaking committee (ARC) was instructed by DOT to formulate recommended flight and duty time revisions. The ARC met for 45 days and completed its task. Now it is time for DOT to fulfill its obligation to put forward new regulations. The safety of the traveling public is paramount, and we urge DOT to follow through on its commitment.

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Please advise us when DOT will publish the NPRM and when DOT expects to implement revised regulations on flight and duty time for pilots.

Sincerely,


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